



**PRESS RELEASE – April 10, 2015**

**Communications: 972-624-3156**

## **Keep eyes on the road, not on your phone**

THE COLONY, Texas — The National Safety Council designates April as Distracted Driving Awareness Month. Council statistics indicate distracted driving is the nation's third-leading cause of roadway fatalities behind alcohol and speeding.

In conjunction with the Safety Council's initiative, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has kicked off its annual "Talk, Text, Crash" campaign to encourage drivers to turn off their devices and give their full attention to the road.

According to TxDOT, there were 100,825 crashes in Texas in 2014 involving distracted driving — a 6-percent increase from the previous

year. TxDOT cites the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, which says drivers using a mobile phone are four times more likely to cause serious injury in a crash. Distracted driving-related crashes in Texas are highest among 16- to 24-year-olds.



"Nearly one in five traffic crashes in Texas is caused by a distracted driver," said TxDOT Deputy Executive Director John Barton, in a release. "Last year, 468 people were killed because someone took their attention off the road. How important is a fleeting distraction when it could end in the death of someone, perhaps even one of your loved ones?"

While the volume of road construction in The Colony is a sign of progress, those conditions require even more care and attention from drivers, said Brant Shallenburger, director of Government Relations for the city.

"Driving through a work zone already requires extra caution to ensure the safety of workers and motorists alike," he said. "Driving distracted is a tragedy waiting to happen. As we stressed during National Work Zone Awareness Week in March, please slow down in construction zones and keep your eyes on the road, not on your phone."

Text messaging is particularly dangerous, according to TxDOT, which highlights research conducted recently by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute that showed it takes a driver double the amount of

time to react when they are distracted by text messaging. Additionally, sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes away from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds. At 55 mph, that's the equivalent of driving the length of a football field while blindfolded.

While mobile phone use is the most recognizable driving distraction, any type of behavior that draws a motorist's attention away from driving is dangerous. TxDOT urges drivers to refrain from:

- texting;
- checking email;
- eating and drinking;
- grooming;
- reading;
- programming a navigation system; and,
- adjusting music or other audio device.

If a distraction requires immediate attention, drivers are encouraged to pull over to a safe location and come to a complete stop before diverting their attention.

For more information, contact Shallenburger at 972-624-3108 or go online to the National Safety Council's [website](#) and/or the Texas Department of Transportation's [website](#).

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